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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

School board members split on 'Brave New World'

Posted: Wednesday, Nov 05, 2008 - 10:37:02 pm PST

By MAUREEN DOLAN

Staff writer

COEUR d'ALENE -- A classic science fiction novel could be the first casualty of the Coeur d'Alene School District's efforts to assure all books on required reading lists have been approved by the school board before teachers use them in district classrooms.

Trustees could not agree whether to accept a book review committee's recommendation to add Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" to the list of approved reading materials at their meeting Monday.

With four out of five board members present, the vote was split 2-2 resulting in a decision to consider the book again at the December board meeting when they anticipate full attendance.

Bill Hemenway, appointed to the board after Christie Wood resigned in July, was absent.

"I find, from my own level, it is extremely repetitious and it drives in the sexuality issues and other civilization's issues to almost ad nauseam and I find its balance is extremely lacking," said trustee Vern Newby.

Published in 1932, "Brave New World" describes the pitfalls of a future society controlled by technology where everything, from politics to human reproduction, is engineered to eliminate human discomfort.

Newby read the novel and sat in on a second committee review of it. He said he wanted to hear discussions about how the book will be used in the classroom.

"I did not receive the value of that. I would have to recommend that 'Brave New World' not be among the approved novels," he said.

Although board chair Edie Brooks did not read the text, she said she spoke with students who did.

Brooks voted in favor of placing "Brave New World" on the list of approved reading materials because the feedback she received was that it is thought-provoking with themes that are relevant today although Huxley wrote it 75 years ago.

Trustee Diane Zipperer also cast her vote in favor of allowing the book on the reading list.

She did not read the Huxley text, but said the district has "novel rationales" describing the contents of each book for parents and an opt-out mechanism in place for them to request the book not be assigned to their children.

"If you just don't feel it's going in the right direction for your family or your child, then it shouldn't be read," Zipperer said.

Sid Fredrickson did not comment, but joined Newby in voting against approval.

Rosie Astorquia, the district's director of secondary education, presented the review committee's recommendation based on a vote by 20 committee members with three against recommending approval.

The 25-member committee is made up of mainly community members and some district employees.

"We had quite a bit of discussion on both sides of whether this was an appropriate book or not," Astorquia said.

She shared some of the group's comments for and against use of the book.

It was described as "classic, modern literature," she said. Another comment from the committee was that "sexual drug-related references were non-explicit but showed what life might be like if the world were full of casual sex and drug satisfaction with no relationship or love."

"That indication was that this has never been more appropriate for our 12th-graders," Astorquia said.

She said concerns from the review committee were that it is not challenging enough for the grade level, that it is taught at North Idaho College and that it encourages discussion about sexually transmitted disease in English class.

Lake City High School freshmen Mackenzie Sheldon and Jamie Yurick don't believe books should be restricted from use in the classroom, but said there are times certain language being read aloud makes them uncomfortable.

Neither has read "Brave New World."

Mackenzie said they just finished reading "Of Mice and Men" in English.

She feels reading aloud should be an option, not a requirement.

"They use bad words every other paragraph," Jamie said. "Kids get to one of those words and they just stutter. The teacher would make them say it."

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Garfield-Palouse school officials worried about economy's effect on M&O levies

By Yesenia Amaro, Daily News staff writer

Posted on: Wednesday, November 05, 2008

The Garfield and Palouse school districts are taking the nation's current economic situation into consideration as they begin preparing for levies they plan to run in March.

Meanwhile, officials in other area school districts feel fortunate that they won't have to run another levy until after 2010.

Palouse School District Superintendent Bev Fox said the district has a \$320,000 maintenance and operation levy that will expire next year.

Fox said district officials have not yet determined how much money they'll ask patrons to approve next spring.

School board member Darin Watkins said the district needs the levy to help operate and run the schools.

He said even though Garfield-Palouse High School is in relatively good shape for its age, district officials recently discovered problems with the building.

"A roof line is cracked and leaking," he said, and an entryway is coming apart, among other things.

He said the estimated cost for the repairs is more than \$100,000, and he is concerned that the state of the economy might affect the district's ability to pass a levy.

"Is difficult to know how the economy is going to be," he said.

Still, Watkins said the district has "pretty good support" from the community.

Garfield School District Superintendent Zane Wells said the economy definitely will affect his district's levy decisions.

The district currently has a \$200,000 maintenance and operation levy and a \$20,000 capital project levy, both of which will expire next year.

School board member Ken Renstrom said the total amount for the levies most likely will remain the same, at about \$220,000.

"We have decided that (the levy) is not going to increase under the economic circumstances," he said. "There is a big concern of small schools passing their levies."

Renstrom said the district typically asks patrons to approve a two-year levy, but is considering running a one-year levy under the economic circumstances.

There will be more discussion about the duration and amount of the levy over the next several weeks, he said. A final decision will be made in December.

Pullman School District patrons approved a four-year levy earlier this year. The district previously had run levies on a biennial basis, but now won't have to run another levy until 2011.

Pullman Superintendent Paul Sturm said district officials are happy to have the four-year levy and the stability that comes along with it.

Colfax School District patrons approved a two-year levy earlier this year. Business Manager Reece Jenkin said having the levies in place provides the district with financial security.

The district will receive \$910,000 in 2009 and \$930,000 in 2010, he said.

"The community has supported it," he said.

Colton School District Superintendent C. Dale Foley did not return calls seeking comment.

Yesenia Amaro can be reached at (208) 882-5561, ext. 237, or by e-mail at yamaro@dnews.com.

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Grant will help students plan for careers

- STATESMAN STAFF

Edition Date: 11/06/08

Capital Educators Federal Credit Union named Melody Moehlmann of Cole Valley Christian Schools in Meridian Teacher of the Month for small schools on Oct. 29.

She received a \$750 grant to help implement her Idaho Career Information System for high school students, which will provide students with the skill assessment tests they need to prepare for careers.

This is the second month of the Teacher of the Month program that will continue through the end of the school year, according to Todd Erickson, CEO of Cap Ed.

Two teachers are selected from grant applications submitted by teachers within CapEd's area of membership, which includes the 15 southwestern Idaho counties. The next applications are due Nov. 10. For details and application forms, go to www.capedfcu.org or pick up the forms at one of six CapEd locations in Ada and Canyon counties.

Boise student wins national essay contest

- STATESMAN STAFF

Edition Date: 11/06/08

Micah Brady, a student at St. Mary's School in Boise, has won the annual National Paralyzed Veterans Essay Contest with a piece about his brother. The eighth-grader was chosen as the grand prize winner from more than 1,300 entries across the country.

Brady's win marks the second year in a row a St. Mary's student has won the grand prize in this essay contest. Last year, Cede Pratt, a sixth-grader, won.

Brady will receive a trip to Washington, D.C., and attend Veterans Day ceremonies at the Arlington National Cemetery and the Paralyzed Veterans of America's reception.

Nampa schools launches newsletter for parents

- Idaho Statesman

Edition Date: 11/05/08

Parents of Nampa School District students will receive the first of four quarterly newsletters in November.

The School and Family Matters newsletter will be mailed to every parent and includes information about school safety, student test scores and school report cards, ways for parents to get involved in education, and information about available online resources.

The newsletter is published in English and Spanish.

For more information contact Allison Westfall, the district's public information officer, at 468-4602.

Centennial elementary hosts Veteran's Day meal

- Idaho Statesman
Edition Date: 11/05/08

Centennial Elementary School will host its annual Veteran's Day Chili Feed, 6 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 11, at the school, 522 Mason Lane, Nampa.

The meal is free for veterans. The cost for non-veterans is \$2 for chili, muffin and drink, and for an additional 50 cents, a salad. A variety of baked goods will be for sale.

The event will include presentation of the flag, concert by fourth- and fifth-graders, and a wax museum of historical figures.

For more information, contact the school at 468-4627.

Skyview event honors veterans

- Idaho Statesman
Edition Date: 11/05/08

Comments (0) |

Skyview High School's annual Veteran's Day Assembly will be 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 11, in the school auditorium, 1303 E. Greenhurst Road in Nampa.

This year's guests include Canyon Country Commissioner Dave Ferdinand, retired U.S. Army Col. Curtis Bowers Sr., Marine Staff Sgt. Albert Pardo, U.S. Army Maj. Paul Faletto and Mountain Home Air Force Base Color Guard. Skyview Eagle Scouts from the Big Foot District will perform a flag retirement at 11 a.m., which will be followed by a lunch reception for all visiting veterans.

For more information, contact the school at 468-4627.

PowerSchool gives elementary parents online access

Statesman staff - Idaho Statesman
Edition Date: 11/05/08

For the first time, parents of Nampa School District elementary students will have a tool to monitor their children's grades and attendance at any time of the day.

Parents of elementary students can sign up for the free Web-based service in November at Parent Teacher Conferences.

Parents should contact their child's school for information about how to receive a username and password to access their child's information.

For several years, the district provided online access for parents of middle and high school student to monitor student progress via the Web. Passage of a supplemental levy in May helped support the extension of the PowerSchool system to the district's 15 elementary schools.

More information is available on the school's district's Web site www.nsd131.org under the PowerSchool icon.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

Shoshone school officials regroup after bond fails

By Ben Botkin
Times-News writer

Shoshone School District officials need to decide how to bring improvements to the school now that voters have rejected the district's \$7.5 million bond proposal.

The proposal fell short of the two-thirds approval needed for passage, with 433 in favor and 421 against.

The school district had proposed the bond as a way to add classrooms, a new gym and multi-purpose room and remodeling for the district's 10-year-old building that serves students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

"The need has not gone away," said Superintendent Mel Wiseman.

In recent years, the district's enrollment has increased, growing from 506 students in 2004 to 607 students currently. Wiseman said it's possible that the proposal will be submitted to voters again in six months, adding that the school board will decide whether to place it on the ballot again.

"It will be that continual process of brainstorming whether to consider short-term solutions or trying to come up with more of a permanent solution," Wiseman said.

Next year's enrollment will bring the same changes, he said. Now, for example, 36 fifth-graders are in modular classrooms. Fifty-six fourth-grade students will be in the classrooms next year without any improvements, Wiseman said.

This year, there are 24 seniors graduating, but 42 eighth graders who will be in high school classes next year, Wiseman said.

Wiseman said he appreciates the support that the bond proposal did receive from the community.

"Times are tough," he said. "To say that I was absolutely shocked that it didn't pass, I can't say that. But with the support that we've gotten from the community, I was fairly optimistic even considering the economic times."

Ben Botkin may be reached at 208-735-3238.

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

District chooses teacher of the year

BY JOURNAL STAFF

POCATELLO — Pocatello-Chubbuck School District 25 has chosen Amy Bowie, a Highland High School English teacher, as its teacher of the year for 2008-09.

Schools within the district all pick a teacher of the year upon completion of each school year. One of those teachers is chosen to be the district's teacher of the year. The district's teacher of the year is then placed in the running to become Idaho's teacher of the year.

Finalists for the district's award included Cheryl Price, a fourth-grade teacher at Edahow Elementary School, and Mary Anne Hansen, an eighth grade world geography teacher at Irving Middle School.

Bowie started her teaching career at Highland in 1998. She teaches junior advanced placement language and composition, junior English and a leadership course for student government. She is also a leader in the district's ongoing Total Instructional Alignment, an effort to make curriculum more consistent throughout the district.

"I know that with guidance from caring and concerned teachers, any student can achieve success, and that is the ultimate reward of my job as an educator," Bowie said in a press release. "My greatest accomplishments are far more intimate and meaningful than the evidence on my resume or a list of my professional activities or even my test scores. My greatest accomplishments have names. They have faces. They overcome adversity, exceed expectations and inspire others. They are my students."

Bowie was recognized during last week's school board meeting and was awarded a \$250 gift by the Southeast Idaho Medical Association. The association also made a \$250 contribution in Bowie's name to her favorite charity, Bannock House.

Based on her award, Bowie will speak at the district's high school highest honors dinner and at the Greater Pocatello Chamber of Commerce's new teacher luncheon.

Women faculty, students present research at symposium

BY YANN RANAIVO

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POCATELLO — Donna Lybecker has spent the past decade studying the impact of illegal immigration on the environment surrounding a portion of the U.S. and Mexican border.

Lybecker, also a political science professor at ISU, was among a number of women researchers presenting their work during the third annual WeLead Research Symposium at Idaho State University on Wednesday.

The event, partly funded through a National Science Foundation grant, gives women faculty and students the opportunity to showcase their progress on various research projects.

ISU President Arthur Vailas, who was present Wednesday to look at some research posters, said the symposium highlights the university's ambition to become a greater research institution.

"Research is (increasing) more and more with faculty and students," he said.

Lybecker began focusing her research on Southwest Arizona's Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in 2003 and showed during a presentation at Idaho State University's Rendezvous Center that increased immigration has affected the natural area's desert land and wildlife.

In her early afternoon presentation, Lybecker said that immigrants have left an increasing number of abandoned cars and waste on the border's lands. She said the waste has threatened the area's wildlife, which is home to the desert big horn sheep.

Lybecker's work also touches on the subject of illegal immigration, a problem the professor believes can't be solved by building a wall running along the border.

What Lybecker does support is building more vehicle barriers that will decrease the number of cars immigrants illegally drive across the border.

"The problem exists because what is politically happening does not match what is physically happening," she said. "I think that something needs to be done about illegal immigration, and I don't think a three-layered wall will do it."

In her research, however, Lybecker did express support for the Secure Fence Act of 2006. The law authorizes the government to place more lighting, physical barriers, border checkpoints and electronic equipment such as cameras and satellites.

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online today.